

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This amendment is made in response to the Examiner's rejection of October 1, 2004. Therein, the Examiner indicated her calculation of the priority dates for various limitations contained in this specification. The Applicant makes no comments with respect to the priority dates, since with respect to this amendment, it will be seen that all of the claims are traversed over any of the art cited.

First, it is gratefully acknowledged that claims 19 through 22 were allowed. Second, claim 30 was rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by the Wisselink patent U.S. No. 6,428,565. However, in examining claim 30, the Examiner has seemingly ignored at least one limitation contained claim 30 and *not* disclosed in Wisselink. That is, in claim 30 the connector members have a shape which is different than the strut shape of the proximal and distal sections of the stent. The Examiner has identified that element 42, 48 is the alleged connector member of the Wisselink device. It can be readily seen from the disclosure that element 42, 48 is in no way a "connector" member. Rather, Wisselink identifies element 42 as a "semirigid frustoconical member" which extends outwardly from the "first ring member 40" as shown in Fig. 1b. This semirigid frustoconical member is not the connector claimed; ;and, of course, a graft does not act as a stent as in the current device. So, it is inappropriate for the Examiner to characterize frustoconical member 42 as a connector, such as that claimed therein .

Also, element 48 identified by the Examiner is called a semirigid ring member. This appears to be some sort of mating apparatus for graft 16. Moreover, the Wisselink "stent" is only a pair of graft anchoring mechanisms 18 and 20 contained at opposite ends of the Wisselink mechanism. In all, it is inappropriate to call the Wisselink device a bifurcated stent as in claim 30.

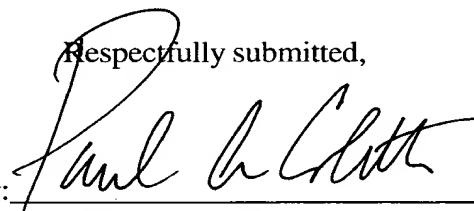
Claims 23-28 were rejected using 35 USC § 103(a) over the Richter reference, US Patent No. 5,755,734. Claim 23 has now been amended. Claims 26-28 have been made dependent upon claim 23; and claim 25 has been canceled. Claim 23 now shows that the

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junction between the first and second cylindrical forms, forms a series of strut shaped connectors thereat, so that the stent forms a y-shaped opening through the interior portion of the stent, without any overlap of either wall portion of the stent. Further, the connectors are welded around the entire circumference of the second cylindrical form.

The Examiner has correctly noted that Richter at best discloses a single weld at column 4 of his disclosure. However, Richter (as well as any of the other art) does not show a weld formed at the junction between the two cylindrical forms so as to maintain the integrity of the lumen of the stent apparatus. Maintaining integrity allows for better apposition at the bifurcation, which the interventionalist is seeking to stent. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the particular modification made to the stent herein allows for better results and is simply not realized by the prior art devices.

Accordingly, it is earnestly solicited that claims 23, 24 and 26-28 are in condition for allowance. A Notice of their Allowability, as well as the Allowability of claims 19-22 and 30 is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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